



8 March 2026 – International Women’s Day

Women of the Western Balkans: No Democratic Future Without Us

As Europe and the Western Balkans face a moment of profound political and social transition, we state clearly: **women will not stand on the sidelines**. The principles that define our shared European future — peace, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, equality, social cohesion, and climate justice — are under pressure and demand decisive leadership.

On this 8 March, we, the progressive, socialdemocratic women of the Western Balkans, affirm that **there is no democratic renewal, no peace, and no credible European path without women’s full participation**. Women make up half of our societies; excluding us from power is not only unjust — it is a direct threat to democratic stability.

We call for **legally binding gender parity** at all levels of political, economic, and security decision making. Persistent underrepresentation of women is a structural democratic deficit that weakens our institutions and undermines our region’s resilience.

The choices we make today will determine whether the Western Balkans moves forward or falls back. We commit to building societies where dignity, equality, and accountability are real, not rhetorical. We commit to safeguarding our social fabric and natural environment for future generations. And we demand policies that recognise women’s full life course — from health to care responsibilities to working conditions — so that no stage of life becomes a barrier to participation.

Together with our male progressive and socialdemocratic leaders we reject the normalization of coercion and conflict. A peaceful and stable Western Balkans requires investment in prevention, diplomacy, and democratic accountability — and women must be at the centre of these efforts. **No negotiation, reform, or peace process is legitimate without women at the table**.

Today, on International Women’s Day, we speak with one voice:
The Western Balkans cannot move forward — democratically, peacefully, or toward Europe — without women’s leadership.

We, progressives and socialdemocrats, are not asking for space. We are taking it.
